

REMARKS.

General remarks.

Claims 1-45 are all the claims pending in the application. Due to the multiple dependencies of the claims, there are 101 claims in all.

The Examiner has allowed 83 of the 101 claims, including independent claims 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 46, 48, and 49, and all of their respective dependent claims.

*Some of the withdrawn claims are allowable.*

Three of the claims (namely, 45, 43, and 44) have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 43 and 44 depend from independent claim 1. Since claim 1 is allowed, however, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner now to allow dependent claims 43 and 44 as well.

The prior art rejection.

The Examiner rejected independent claim 5 and all of its dependent claims. Independent claim 5 stands finally rejected as being anticipated by Barinaga.

Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, first with respect to independent claim 5, as now amended, which requires that the valve device close the ink channel by elastically abutting against the protruding rim of the packing member. Barinaga does not meet this requirement.

In Barinaga, as best shown in Figs. 2, 9, and 10, when a ball valve 102 is pressed against a septum 104 having a surface with a slit 110 for sealing the liquid ink, a protruding rim extending from the septum 104 comes to receive and surround the valve 102 (but not seal it). At this time, the sealing is accomplished when the valve 102 is urged against the upper end of the slit 110, not by any abutment against the protruding rim (the rim is not even a numbered part – is just helps keep the ball in place but has no sealing function). It is true that an inner surface of the rim may contact part of the surface of the ball valve 102, but such contact is just for holding the ball's position (a ball at the end of a spring is very unstable and needs the positioning of the

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septum's rim). In other words, the rim does not seal any liquid (i.e., does not close the ink channel) at the contact surface between the inner surface of the rim and the valve.

On the other hand, in accordance with the present invention, the closing of the ink channel takes place when a valve device is elastically urged against the protruding rim of the packing member. In addition, the valve device does not make a contact with the inner surface of the packing members for sealing liquid. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that the intended function of the protruding rim in the present invention clearly differs from that of the rim taught in Barinaga, and this distinction is now explicitly set out in the claim.

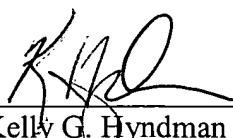
Applicant therefore respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw this rejection of independent claim 5, and its dependent claims.

Conclusion and request for telephone interview.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee, except for the Issue Fee, for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 19-4880.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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